

CITY OF JERSEY CITY

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City Partners with Parks Coalition on “Big Dig” 17,000 Bulbs to be planted during ‘Make A Difference Day’ event

JERSEY CITY – Mayor Jerramiah T. Healy and the **Jersey City Parks Coalition** will hold an **11 a.m. press conference** on **Thursday, Oct. 6, 2011** outside of City Hall to announce the **Big Dig** – a unique “**Make A Difference Day**” partnership that will see **17,000 daffodils and tulips** planted in **80 locations** throughout the city.

The **Big Dig**, which is supported by an army of volunteers from across the city, as well as the Mayor’s Office, the Division of Parks & Forestry and the Division of Cultural Affairs, will take place on **Saturday, October 22, 2011**. Everyone is encouraged to attend and make a difference in their community.

Dozens of city parks, select open spaces, schools, libraries, historic cemeteries and gateways to the city will be blooming in yellows, oranges and reds for April and May 2012. Donations are being raised from individuals and corporations who are committed to the beautification of their hometown and who see this as an investment that will keep on giving year after year.

“For the past few years, my office has been involved in recognizing Make A Difference Day with events in Jersey City,” said **Mayor Healy**. “However, this year is different as this is the first time we have had one, overarching event for the entire city. We thank the Jersey City Parks Coalition for this concept of coordinated bulb planting throughout the city and for all of their hard work to get this project off the ground.”

Begun in 1990 as a national day dedicated to helping others, **Make A Difference Day** is an annual event sponsored by *USA Weekend Magazine* on the fourth Saturday of every October. Volunteers can join a group project or come up with their own project, like spending the day at a soup kitchen or helping an elderly neighbor around the house. Those who can’t participate on Saturday for religious reasons can do their community service on Sunday.

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This is the first citywide event for the Jersey City Parks Coalition although the Coalition has established Community Gardens in 10 of their 14 member parks groups. Since 2004, spring plantings and fall bulbs have been making a difference in parks such as Pershing Field, Van Vorst Park, Riverview-Fisk Park, Sgt. Anthony Park, Ercel Webb Park, as well as Washington Park and Lincoln Park.

“We really saw this as a way of making a difference in our community by planting bulbs that bloom in the spring, yielding colorful flowers in our parks and at our gateways,” said **Charlene Burke, project manager for the Big Dig**. “Participating in an event like this is not only a great way to improve your community, but also helps you meet your neighbors that share a common goal.”

In addition to sponsorship from the City of Jersey City, the BIG DIG is sponsored by Century 21 Plaza Realty, the Hudson County Improvement Authority, the Jersey City Municipal Utilities Authority, Liberty State Park, PSE&G, United Water, and The Westin Jersey City, as well as many other local businesses, organizations, and residents.

“Planting bulbs in every ward and at prominent and visible entries will hopefully encourage neighbors to take the next step in the Spring of 2012 and develop small community gardens which the City is encouraging through our ‘Adopt-A-Lot’ program and our ‘365 Days of Green’ program,” said **Mayor Healy**. “We encourage residents to come out and support this event and in the days following to continue to help make Jersey City a greener city.”

For more information, to make a donation, or to volunteer with the Big Dig, please call **Laura Skolar 201-259-1800** or **Charlene Burke at 201-344-2060** or visit the Jersey City Parks Coalition website at **www.jcparks.org**.

All media inquiries should be directed to Jennifer Morrill, Press Secretary to Mayor Jerramiah T. Healy at 201-547-4836 or 201-376-0699.///